

SOCIAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, EXCEPT AUGUST, BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND RURAL WORK
THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

MISSIONS BUILDING

222 DOWNEY AVENUE

NO. 8, VOL. V

PRICE: \$1.00 PER YEAR INCLUDES SOCIAL ACTION MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER, 1942

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND RURAL WORK MAKES ITS BOW

At the June meeting of the board of trustees the UCMS action was taken creating a department of Social Welfare and Rural Work in the Division of Home Missions, with James A. Crain as executive secretary. The new department was created by adding to the department of social welfare, which was established in the Division of Home Missions more than 18 months ago, the budget and personnel of the department of social welfare and responsibility for development of a brotherhood program of rural work, including mountain highlander work, sharecropper and migrant work, and supervision of the work of Hazel Green and Livingston academies.

Among the reasons for the change is the fact that for some years the program of home missions in all communions has been moving toward the new frontier of human needs. The need for establishing and fostering new churches has largely passed with the passing of the old frontier. Instead there has come an entirely new task - though there still will be need for new churches in particular locations. The ministry of the church to tenant and sharecropper farmers, migrant workers, dislocated industrial urban populations, and to neglected groups like mountain highlanders and minority racial and color groups is becoming increasingly important. Among Disciples of Christ more than 50% of the churches are rural in the sense that they are composed of town or country people. Among these groups the basic problems are social - the need for better economic income, better housing, better educational and health facilities, better recreation, and better leadership.

The new program also carries out certain phases of the plan of the Division of Christian Education. For some years the Division of Christian Education has been studying plans for reorganization on an age-level basis of administration instead of the present functional basis. That is to say, instead of the present departments of religious education, social education, missionary education, and missionary organizations, there would be a children's work department, a young people's work department, an adult work department, each with its executive secretary and staff of national directors, together with a general secretary for the entire division. In such a plan of organization there is no place for a department of social education as such,

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GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION FACED SOCIAL ISSUES

Any fears that the International Convention at Grand Rapids would retreat on social issues because of the war situation were dispelled early in the sessions. While the attendance was smaller than at St. Louis last year, when over 5,000 registrations were paid, there was nothing lacking in the quality and courage of the 2,100 delegates who registered as regular members of the convention.

The first issue that faced the convention was a resolution offered by the Board of Managers of The United Christian Missionary Society dealing with the Government's handling of the Japanese situation on the Pacific Coast. The resolution, which was debated and passed in a pre-convention session of the Board of Managers, declared that internment of American citizens without filing of charges, court trial of any kind is contrary to the American spirit of Justice. The resolution urged that hearing boards be set up at once and that all persons of Japanese ancestry found to be loyal to the United States be released from internment and given governmental aid in finding jobs on farms and that those who have suffered damages be compensated. When passed to the Committee on Recommendations of the convention a few slight modifications in language were made to soften the implication of criticism of the Government, but as finally adopted over the protest of a few delegates who seemed to feel that no criticism of the Government should be allowed in war-time, the resolution is fully as strong as it was in the original version.

The peace resolution was adopted with almost no opposition, though it was the subject of bitter debate in the Committee on Recommendations. The resolution was framed by a committee of delegates to the Delaware Conference appointed at the conference by Pres. W. A. Shullenberger. Though it was the most representative committee that ever brought a peace resolution to the convention and the statement included nothing save that which had been agreed upon at Delaware, a few delegates felt that the Church ought to keep silent unless it can pledge its full effort to the war. A resolution pledging support to the Government in whatever it may do to protect democracy and Christianity was reduced to a simple pledge of loyalty consistent with conscience. Joe Hunter and Searle Bates were outstanding speakers in various sessions. Perhaps the Town Hall meeting evoked the greatest interest of any feature of the program.

A REVIEW OF THE LABOR YEAR

American labor comes to Labor Day this year in the strongest position in its history. The National Labor Relations Act appears to be firmly established in our legal system, and while the National Labor Relations Board is for the time being overshadowed in importance by the War Labor Board, which has jurisdiction in labor disputes involving war production, there is no indication that its importance is lessened. Unemployment is down, though not for all groups. Money wages are high, but not as high in relation to living costs as hourly and weekly wage figures might seem to indicate.

The Growing Strength of Organized Labor. The three great groups of organized labor - the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the American Federation of Labor, and the railway brotherhoods - are enjoying the greatest period of prosperity in their history. Membership is up - totaling perhaps as many as 12 million dues-paying members. Labor's claim to 'maintenance of membership' (contract requirement that employers retain in employment only those who maintain union membership) is rapidly being accepted as a principle in labor relationships. Though widely criticised in certain sections of the press and by certain anti-union employers, the principle is vital from labor's point of view. Since the contract is between the employer and his employees as a group, it is reasonable, labor argues, to require that all persons who benefit from the contract help maintain it. Also, if the union is to represent the workers it is reasonable to give the union some control over those whose battles it fights.

Rapprochement Between the CIO and AFL. One of the most hopeful signs in the industrial sky is the indication that the CIO-AFL breach is in the process of being healed. This is possible largely because of the elimination of John L. Lewis from leadership in the CIO. Lewis, who might have gone down in labor history as a greater figure than Samuel Gompers, elected instead to follow his own personal hates and ambitions and is now reduced to the leadership of his own United Mine Workers, plus a small personal following. His bitter antagonism to President Roosevelt led him to make a number of tactical errors which have proved costly to his leadership. His mistakes began when he made demands on the President for certain actions and reminded him of substantial campaign contributions made in the 1936 elections, and ended when he broke with his former friend Philip Murray and tried to oust him from the CIO presidency. Today Mr. Lewis is labor's lonely man. In the meantime the aggressive Murray has strengthened the loose aggregation of strong industrial unions over which he presides and has demonstrated genuine statesmanship in his administration. William Green, ineffectual president of the AFL, has learned to respect the CIO, and together with his executive board, composed of the heads of powerful craft unions, now moves toward an understanding and perhaps a union of the two movements. If this is consummated American labor will be in a still stronger position to meet the post-war situation.

Labor Abuses. With its growth in strength and power charges of serious abuses are made against organized labor. Some of these charges are founded in fact, but many of them are false. In any movement as large and as strong as that of organized labor there are bound to be conditions that need correction. Certain unions are not democratic in control but are run by small cliques which dictate to the membership. Petrillo's domination over the Musicians' Union appears to be a case in point. But these conditions will be remedied in time. Already George Brown and William Bioff have joined Scalise of the Building Service Employees Union in prison. In certain unions, especially in building construction trades have extorted unconscionably high initiation fees and dues from emergency workers employed on army camp and industrial defense jobs. But when the full story of the graft and dishonesty involved in the Government "cost plus ten per cent" contracts has been told this may turn out to be a small item after all. In many places Negroes are still excluded from jobs and union membership, though the UAW-CIO has hit this practice hard where it has turned up in its ranks. Despite Mr. Westbrook Pegler's diatribes, and distortion of labor disturbances in certain sections of the press, labor as a whole is giving whole-hearted support to war production. Strikes are relatively few. Man-days lost through strikes totals less than time lost because of illness and accidents. Many of the strikes reported have aspects not revealed in the news and which if known would materially alter the picture. Charges of loafing and deliberate slowing down of work, while doubtless true in individual cases, must be viewed in the light of the rate at which war factories are being erected and equipped, ships are coming down the ways, and bombers off the assembly lines. There is something out of joint when a newspaper in its editorial column charges labor with deliberate sabotage of the war effort and in its news columns boasts of ships launched in 38 days from the time the keel was laid. In answer to the charge that labor is exploiting the nation's danger to demand high wages, labor points to the increasing cost of living. The War Labor Board found in the case of the United Steelworkers that living costs in steel towns advanced 13.3% between April 1941, and March 1942; during the same period average hourly earnings in the industry increased approximately 3.2%, but that weekly earnings decreased by a fraction of 1%. On the other hand, labor points to high dividends being paid to stockholders and to high salaries, and bonuses being paid to management, not alone working management, but board chairmen and directors. Quite naturally, the worker puts \$75 or \$100 per week over against these incomes and asks, "Who is exploiting the national emergency?"

With its programs of worker education, its cooperative credit unions, its health and housing programs, etc., labor is today a mighty force for social good in the nation.

ON SOCIAL FRONTIERS

As the result of negotiations between Yale University and the United Automobile Workers - CIO, UAW members who meet requirements will be eligible for four-month scholarships (each worth \$600) in the University for specialization in economics and collective bargaining. The UAW-CIO also operates a summer school at the University of Michigan.

Oxford University Press, 114-5th Ave., NYC offers a series of important pamphlets by outstanding national & international authorities under the general title "America in a World at War." Among the authors are James Truslow Adams, Walter Millis, Henry F. Pringle, & James P. Warburg. They can be secured under three different plans: \$1 for 12, \$2 for the next 24 issued, or \$3 for all issued pamphlets plus the next 24 to be printed.

Little is being said or will be until after elections are over about certain drastic conscription bills now before Congress. It can be assumed that as soon as elections are out of the way a new drive for further regimentation of the American people will get under way. The Baldwin Bill (H.R. 6806) provides for the registration of all women between 18 & 65 "to provide complete information as to the capacity and availability...for service, civilian or military, in connection with the prosecution of the war." (Underscoring ours.) A Bill introduced by Sen. Bilbo in Mississippi provides for the "total mobilization of the people & resources of the U.S. for prosecution of the war." Receiving most consideration is the May Bill (H.R. 6977) to give the President power to determine the "rate, rent, price, commission, compensation, or reward" for "any article, service, or thing," and providing that the President may require "the registration of all or any class of persons" and "at his option, such persons....may be brought into the service of the Government for the duration of the war under such rules and regulations as the President may prescribe." While it is doubtful if the Bill will be enacted in its present form, all citizens concerned for the maintenance of democratic forms in Government during the war should be aware that this Bill provides for a complete dictatorship by the President.

Harvey Ako Itano, Sacramento born, Japanese-American pre-medical student of the University of California was taken from classes to an evacuation center on April 22. At graduation exercises this 21-year-old lad was awarded the University Gold Medal, the highest award made to members of the class. He was unable to be present to receive the medal and University authorities planned to forward it to him as soon as his location could be learned. Itano had a straight "A" average throughout his four years in college. He was a member of Sigma Chi, Phi Beta Kappa, the Honor Students' Club, and the YMCA cabinet.

Members of UAW-CIO Hudson Local 154, were scored by R. J. Thomas, International President, when they walked off their jobs because they refused to work with 11 Negro workers who were transferred to one department of the Hudson arsenal in line with seniority rights and as a result of completion of an upgrade period. The strike was declared off & the workers ordered to return to their jobs.

WHOM DO 'POLL TAX' CONGRESSMEN REPRESENT?

It has been charged again and again that the majority of citizens in the eight so-called 'poll tax' states are not represented in the selection of officials who govern them. The United Automobile Worker on July 15, 1942, published a list of ten members of Congress from 'poll tax' states, showing the population of their districts and the percentage of votes to population they received in 1940 elections. The list is shown below:

<u>Congressman</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Cox	Georgia	273,436	7
Starnes	Alabama	294,539	7.5
Smith	Virginia	318,495	13
Hobbs	Alabama	283,622	9.9
Dies	Texas	331,069	13
Rankin	Mississippi	263,367	7
Vinson	Georgia	289,404	7.6
Gibson	Georgia	255,139	9.6
Kilday	Texas	338,176	16
Bland	Virginia	250,621	8.9

Here is a situation where ten Congressmen in five important states, some of whom hold key positions in the national government, hold office on the ballots of an average of less than 10 per cent of those whom they 'represent'! What would happen to these men if the restrictive poll tax laws were repealed and all of the people were given the ballot?

UNION DEMANDS HOTELS DROP RACE DISCRIMINATION

According to a United Press dispatch dated August 7, the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, claiming a membership of 400,000, gave the Indianapolis city administration and hotel managers three days to withdraw "rules discriminating against Negroes" or the union would move its convention to some other city. The union was slated to open its convention at the Claypool Hotel on Labor Day, with an expected attendance of 500 delegates. The issue arose when the union discovered that Negro delegates would not be accepted. The dispatch quoted union officers as saying, "This union is not only 100 per cent opposed to such discriminatory practices, but is making in the plants and shops of our industry a big contribution to the whole fight against this and all other forms of Fascism. We do not intend to bargain on this issue with the hotel proprietors of Indianapolis or any other city. Either they do the right and American thing - or else."

Our applause for this forthright action on behalf of decency and democracy is modified by the humiliating knowledge that not many church bodies have as much courage and grit - if that's the proper term.

Send 20 cents to the Sales Literature Section of the UCMS, Missions Building, Indianapolis for a copy of A Message of the Delaware Conference on the Churches and A Just and Durable Peace and the Study Guide, prepared by James A. Crain. Groups all over the world are studying the form of world organization we shall have after the fighting ends. Churches throughout the land are making this a major for the Fall and Winter.

Department of Social Welfare (continued)

since the function of social education, as well as religious and missionary education, would be carried on by staff members in the respective age-level departments. Under the plan, which has not yet been finally worked or approved, functions that have heretofore been carried as departments would be looked after by committees made up of age-level representatives. Under the new arrangement Mr. Crain, while serving as an executive secretary in the Division of Home Missions, will continue as chairman of the committee on social education in the Division of Christian Education.

It is perhaps too early to announce definite plans for the new department, but the following are among the proposals that are being given consideration:

1. Community social welfare programs based on Hazel Green and Livingston academies. With secondary education accepted as a definite responsibility of the state there is question as to whether a religious body should maintain high schools. Both Hazel Green and Livingston were established to supply high school facilities where these were lacking. As soon as the state sees fit to take over this responsibility our educational task will be complete. There are however other services in the field of community health, vocational training, especially in agriculture, stock breeding, handcraft work, community recreation and welfare, that need attention. Already we have a small hospital at Hazel Green which, though it is under private management, occupies a part of one of the academy buildings. This service might be enlarged and expanded. Boys' and girls' clubs, young people's summer work camps, community extension work, adult education, etc., are among the future possibilities.

2. We must develop better leadership for our town and country churches. Already a small but growing group of well prepared young men and women are giving themselves to the rural ministry. The number must be enlarged. Our schools and colleges must be induced to offer more courses designed to prepare rural leaders. This will mean, in addition to thorough Biblical training, courses in rural sociology, rural economics, rural pastoral work, and the like. It is hoped that the churches at Hazel Green and Livingston can serve as experimentation centers.

3. Many men now serving rural fields are anxious for more training. Efforts must be made to get our rural pastors and leaders into such summer short courses as are available at Merom Institute, Merom, Indiana, Purdue University, the Cornell summer short course, etc. During this summer we have had two of our Negro leaders, W. O. Gill of Jarvis Christian College and William K. Fox, a graduate student of Chicago University Divinity School, in the Tuskegee Movable School studying methods of rural work.

4. Summer conferences on rural church life must be encouraged and aided. Forty persons attended such a conference this summer at Bethany Park as a project of the Indiana Rural Church Commission. Such conferences ought to be set up in strategic centers throughout the brotherhood.

5. Continued and increasing cooperation with such interdenominational agencies as the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches in developing programs of service for sharecropper and migrant families. For the past two summers E. H. Culpepper, a student at Jarvis Christian College has worked among Negro migrants in Illinois and Michigan under the Home Missions Council. George W. Wise, a Howard County Indiana rural minister is serving this summer as a member of the local committee sponsoring the Home Missions Council program among migrant vegetable workers.

6. Cooperation with other brotherhood agencies to secure better support for town and country preachers. This will include, in some places, developing pastoral unities so that one minister can serve two or three churches and thus secure a living income.

7. Efforts to develop and rebuild American rural culture. The highest culture that America has ever known was that of Colonial New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and the pre-Civil War South. The rise of industrialism and neglect of agriculture drained the country areas of its leadership and its economic security. The rural church has become decadent. We must begin to rebuild these fortresses of civilization.

Naturally, no one group has a mandate to serve as the sole source of ministry to rural church. Cooperation with the entire brotherhood, all its forces, and with all other agencies working for the salvation of human society must be sought.

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IS "IN BEING."

The World Council of Churches projected at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, and of which a Provisional Committee was established in 1938, is now "in being;" 28 countries and 77 communions have accepted membership. Present at the committee's meeting in England this summer, were Dr. Henry L. Smith, American secretary, Dr. Wm. Temple, chm., Archbishop of Canterbury, British and European secretaries, and the British Section. It was agreed to hold a meeting of the Administrative Committee immediately after the armistice; later a meeting of the Central Committee and the World Assembly when post-war conditions permit.

SECTION 562. P. L. & R.

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